# REMARKS

These remarks are responsive to the Office Action, designated FINAL, mailed 17 Feb 2005.

Claims 1 and 12 are in the case, neither as yet allowed.

## 35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 1-26 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Felkey et al (U.S. PG Pub 2002/0161667) in view of Nicastro et al (U.S. Patent No. 2004/0015367).

Applicants have canceled claims 2-11 and 13-26 without prejudice.

With respect to claims 1 and 12, applicants have amended the claims to set forth specific characteristics of the method and system of their invention.

As amended, claims 1 and 12 distinguish the Felkey and

END920000176US1                    23              S/N 09/815,312

Nicastro references in the specific system configuration recited, the function and content of each system component, and in particular the content, construction, and use of user and resource profiles - both references being silent with respect to such newly recited limitations of the claims.

In the following material, claims 1 and 12 are annotated with reference to the drawings, thus showing support in the specification for the newly added limitations.

1.   A method for providing procurement services to a plurality of customer companies with complex accounting rules while providing secure information viewing in support of said customer companies, said customer companies bing organized in a plurality of customer company groups and procurement coalitions for volume discounts and access to shared contracts with respect to a plurality of vendors, with procurement contracts leveraged across company groups, comprising the steps of:

> providing a front end requisition and catalog server [40] for providing a user interface to a user at a customer company browser [46] to access catalogs and

END920000176US1                   24              S/N 09/815,312

commodities managed by said enterprise and for
providing approval notices [72] and receiving
approve/reject data [71] with respect to customer
approvers;

inputs to said front end requisition and catalog
server [40] from an enterprise procurement
services system [42] including requisition status
[41], purchase order status and contracts [43],
cost centers [45], currency exchange rates [47],
general ledger accounts [49], purchase order
history invoices [53], purchase order history
receipts [55], and confirmations [56]; outputs
from said requisition and catalog server [40] to
said procurement services system [42] including
requisitions [51] and positive confirmation
responses [57];

inputs to said front end requisition and catalog
server [40] from said customer company browser
[46] including submit requisition; outputs from
said requisition and catalog server [40] to said
customer company browser [46] including
approval/rejection notices [62], status display

[63], and negative and positive confirmations;

with notice and response data [65] being exchanged

between said requisition and catalog server [40]

and browser [46];


inputs to said front end requisition and catalog

server [40] from a vendor system [48] including

vendor catalogs [73] via an enterprise electronic

data interchange application [44];


inputs to said front end requisition and catalog

server [40] from an enterprise requisition and

catalog system including postal code validation

data [74];


inputs to said front end requisition and catalog

server [40] including human resource extract data

[70] from an enterprise hub server [52];


providing said enterprise procurement services system

[42] managed by said enterprise for accepting

requisitions from said front end requisition and

catalog server [40] entered by said user and responsive

thereto for causing said electronic data interchange

application [44] to generate transactions to said

vendors [48] and for generating accounting transactions

to a leveraged procurement network data warehouse

facility [50] for said requisitions;

inputs to said enterprise procurement services

system [42] from said front end requisition and

catalog server [40] including requisitions [51]

and positive confirmation responses [57]; and

outputs to said front end requisition and catalog

server [40] from said enterprise procurement

services system including requisition status data,

purchase order status and contracts data [43],

cost center data [45], currency exchange rates

[47], general ledger accounts [49], purchase order

history invoices [53], purchase order history

receipts [55], and order confirmations [56];

inputs to said enterprise procurement services

system [42] from said enterprise hub server [52]

including cost center data [79]; and outputs to

said hub server [52] from said enterprise

procurement services system [42] including a

company process control table [76], vendor master

updates [77], and accounting detail [78];

inputs to said enterprise procurement services system [42] from said electronic data interchange application [44] including purchase order acknowledgments [88], invoices [89], payment status [92] and file transfer check reconstructions [93]; and outputs from said enterprise procurement services system [42] to said electronic data interchange application [44] including purchase orders [87], invoice rejections [90] and payments [91];

inputs to said enterprise procurement services system [42] from operator terminals including process purchase orders, requests for quotes, and contracts data [81], create/change vendor master data [82], invoice processing [83], payment proposal data [84], and payment post and print [85];

inputs to said enterprise procurement services system [42] including currency exchange rate data [80] from an external financial services server;

END920000176US1                    28            S/N 09/815,312

and output from said enterprise procurement

services system [42] to vendors [48] including

paper and fax purchase order documents [86];

inputs to said enterprise electronic data

interchange application [44] from said vendor [48]

including purchase acknowledgments [95] and

invoices [96], and outputs from said electronic

data interchange application [44] to said vendor

[48] including purchase orders [94] and invoice

rejections [97];

inputs to said enterprise electronic data

interchange application [44] including payments

from a payment source [32] and outputs from said

enterprise electronic data interchange application

[44] including payments to customer electronic

data interchange applications [30];

providing said leveraged procurement network hosted

data warehouse facility [50] for storing and monitoring

said electronic data interchange transactions and

accounting transactions;

END920000176US1                29            S/N 09/815,312

providing said enterprise hub server [52] for
transferring data between said front end requisition
and catalog server, said back-end purchasing system,
and said data warehouse facility;

inputs to said enterprise procurement services hub
server [52] from said enterprise procurement
services system [42] including company process
control table [76], vendor master updates [77] and
accounting detail [78];

outputs from said enterprise procurement services
hub server [52] including human resource extract
data [70], extracted from customer employee data
[60], to customer requisition and catalog system
[40];

outputs from said enterprise procurement services
hub server [52] to a customer back-end purchasing
system [54] including vendor master data [26],
invoice detail [27], payment detail [28] and bank
clearing detail data [29];

inputs to said enterprise procurement services hub

END920000176US1                    30              S/N 09/815,312

server further including cost centers data [25];

said customer back-end purchasing system [54] also
receiving goods receipts [66] from customer
receiving [34];

establishing in a computer database a user profile for
associating acceptable accounting and system controls
to each person authorized by a customer company to
access said procurement services;

associating each said company with a company group of
related companies;

providing common code defining workflow components
common to all companies within said company group,
including accounting validation and approval
processing;

specifying in said user profile for each said user a
user company and company group so as to define said
controls based on company and company group by

collecting in said user profile each of a

END920000176US1                31                S/N 09/815,312

plurality of users into a user profile table [384]
associating acceptable accounting and system
controls for each person authorized by a customer
company to access procurement services for
leveraging access and maintaining isolation of
data by identifying a user at log on as associated
with a particular company group;

providing in a hub server [52] a company group
human resources file [370] connected through a
fire wall [372] to a requisition and catalog
server [40] for creating and maintaining said user
profile table [384];

said procurement services including process
requirements and data resources accessible only to
those users identified in their profiles as
members of a particular company and, therefore,
company group and including catalogs [465, 476],
contracts [469], cost centers defining departments
that can be charged, a chart of accounts defining
general ledger account codes, entries in said user
profile table [384], business rules and defaults
including those affiliated with accounting and

END920000176US1              32           S/N 09/815,312

specifying fields that must be completed in creating a requisition and default data to be entered in those fields;

providing in each entry for a user in said user profile [384] a company group code [481], a company code [482], a plant code [483] specifying ship to location, an employee serial number [484], and an E-mail address [485];

using said company group code [481] and said company code [482] responsive to user login to associate said user with a given company [248] in a company group [242] for

responsive to user selection of a shop-from-a-catalog button on a user browser, controlling catalog application code to display to said user only those catalogs [465, 467] for which a corresponding catalog profile 466, 468 includes said user's company in said resource profile [487];

END920000176US1                33              S/N 09/815,312

specifying departments that can be
charged across companies [248, 249] in a
company group;

selectively allowing a user [451] to
initiate requests for other users [452],
view general ledger account codes
associated with commodity codes by
company group, company group specific
business rules including accounting
business rule defaults specifying fields
required to be filled in by said user
based on item being bought;

providing for each procurement resource to be shared
among said users a resource profile in a computer
database specifying for each resource those said
companies to have access to and share said procurement
resource; and

responsive to said user profile and said resource
profiles, controlling user access to said procurement
resources.

END920000176US1                    34              S/N 09/815,312

12. System for providing procurement services by an
enterprise to a plurality of customer companies with complex
accounting rules while providing secure information viewing
in support of said customer companies, said customer
companies bing organized in a plurality of customer company
groups and procurement coalitions for volume discounts and
access to shared contracts with respect to a plurality of
vendors, with procurement contracts leveraged across company
groups, comprising:

a front end requisition and catalog server [40] for
providing a user interface to a user at a customer
company browser [46] to access catalogs and commodities
managed by said enterprise and for providing approval
notices [72] and receiving approve/reject data [71]
with respect to customer approvers;

inputs to said front end requisition and catalog
server [40] from an enterprise procurement
services system [42] including requisition status
[41], purchase order status and contracts [43],
cost centers [45], currency exchange rates [47],
general ledger accounts [49], purchase order
history invoices [53], purchase order history

END920000176US1                    35               S/N 09/815,312

receipts [55], and confirmations [56]; outputs
from said requisition and catalog server [40] to
said procurement services system [42] including
requisitions [51] and positive confirmation
responses [57];

inputs to said front end requisition and catalog
server [40] from said customer company browser
[46] including submit requisition; outputs from
said requisition and catalog server [40] to said
customer company browser [46] including
approval/rejection notices [62], status display
[63], and negative and positive confirmations;
with notice and response data [65] being exchanged
between said requisition and catalog server [40]
and browser [46];

inputs to said front end requisition and catalog
server [40] from a vendor system [48] including
vendor catalogs [73] via an enterprise electronic
data interchange application [44];

inputs to said front end requisition and catalog
server [40] from an enterprise requisition and

END920000176US1                36                S/N 09/815,312

catalog system including postal code validation

data [74];


inputs to said front end requisition and catalog

server [40] including human resource extract data

[70] from an enterprise hub server [52];


said enterprise procurement services system [42]

managed by said enterprise for accepting requisitions

from said front end requisition and catalog server [40]

entered by said user and responsive thereto for causing

said electronic data interchange application [44] to

generate transactions to said vendors [48] and for

generating accounting transactions to a leveraged

procurement network data warehouse facility [50] for

said requisitions;


inputs to said enterprise procurement services

system [42] from said front end requisition and

catalog server [40] including requisitions [51]

and positive confirmation responses [57]; and

outputs to said front end requisition and catalog

server [40] from said enterprise procurement

services system including requisition status data,


END920000176US1                37            S/N 09/815,312

purchase order status and contracts data [43],

cost center data [45], currency exchange rates

[47], general ledger accounts [49], purchase order

history invoices [53], purchase order history

receipts [55], and order confirmations [56];

inputs to said enterprise procurement services

system [42] from said enterprise hub server [52]

including cost center data [79]; and outputs to

said hub server [52] from said enterprise

procurement services system [42] including a

company process control table [76], vendor master

updates [77], and accounting detail [78];

inputs to said enterprise procurement services

system [42] from said electronic data interchange

application [44] including purchase order

acknowledgments [88], invoices [89], payment

status [92] and file transfer check

reconstructions [93]; and outputs from said

enterprise procurement services system [42] to

said electronic data interchange application [44]

including purchase orders [87], invoice rejections

[90] and payments [91];

END920000176US1                   38              S/N 09/815,312

inputs to said enterprise procurement services
system [42] from operator terminals including
process purchase orders, requests for quotes, and
contracts data [81], create/change vendor master
data [82], invoice processing [83], payment
proposal data [84], and payment post and print
[85];

inputs to said enterprise procurement services
system [42] including currency exchange rate data
[80] from an external financial services server;
and output from said enterprise procurement
services system [42] to vendors [48] including
paper and fax purchase order documents [86];

inputs to said enterprise electronic data
interchange application [44] from said vendor [48]
including purchase acknowledgments [95] and
invoices [96], and outputs from said electronic
data interchange application [44] to said vendor
[48] including purchase orders [94] and invoice
rejections [97];

inputs to said enterprise electronic data

END920000176US1                39              S/N 09/815,312

interchange application [44] including payments

from a payment source [32] and outputs from said

enterprise electronic data interchange application

[44] including payments to customer electronic

data interchange applications [30];

said leveraged procurement network hosted data

warehouse facility [50] for storing and monitoring said

electronic data interchange transactions and accounting

transactions;

said enterprise hub server [52] for transferring data

between said front end requisition and catalog server,

said back-end purchasing system, and said data

warehouse facility;

inputs to said enterprise procurement services hub

server [52] from said enterprise procurement

services system [42] including company process

control table [76], vendor master updates [77] and

accounting detail [78];

outputs from said enterprise procurement services

hub server [52] including human resource extract

data [70], extracted from customer employee data
[60], to customer requisition and catalog system
[40];

outputs from said enterprise procurement services
hub server [52] to a customer back-end purchasing
system [54] including vendor master data [26],
invoice detail [27], payment detail [28] and bank
clearing detail data [29];

inputs to said enterprise procurement services hub
server further including cost centers data [25];

said customer back-end purchasing system [54] also
receiving goods receipts [66] from customer
receiving [34];

said requisition and catalog server [40] including a
user profile table [384], a company group human
resources file [374], a new employee profile build
application [382], a table build application [378] and
a plurality of procurement resources;

said user profile table [384] associating

END920000176US1                    41               S/N 09/815,312

acceptable accounting and system controls for each

person authorized by a customer company to access

said procurement services for leveraging access

and maintaining isolation of data by identifying a

user at log on as associated with a particular

company group;

said hub server [52] including a company group

human resources file [370] connected through a

fire wall [372] to said requisition and catalog

server [40] for creating and maintaining said user

profile table [384];

said procurement resources including process

requirements and data resources accessible only to

those users identified in their profiles as

members of a particular company and, therefore,

company group and including catalogs [465, 476],

contracts [469], cost centers defining departments

that can be charged, a chart of accounts defining

general ledger account codes, entries in said user

profile table [384], business rules and defaults

including those affiliated with accounting and

specifying fields that must be completed in

END920000176US1                42                S/N 09/815,312

creating a requisition and default data to be
entered in those fields;

each entry for a user in said user profile [384]
including company group code [481], company code
[482], plant code [483] specifying ship to
location, employee serial number [484], and E-mail
address [485];

said company group code [481] and said
company code [482] being operable responsive
to user login to associate said user with a
given company [248] in a company group [242],
thereby

responsive to user selection of a shop-
from-a-catalog button on a user browser
controlling catalog application code to
display to said user only those catalogs
[465, 467] for which a corresponding
catalog profile 466, 468 includes said
user's company in said resource profile
[487];

END920000176US1                  43              S/N 09/815,312

specifying departments that can be
charged across companies [248, 249] in a
company group;

selectively allowing a user [451] to
initiate requests for other users [452],
view general ledger account codes
associated with commodity codes by
company group, company group specific
business rules including accounting
business rule defaults specifying fields
required to be filled in by said user
based on item being bought;

each said company associated with a company group of
related companies;

common code defining workflow components common to all
companies within said company group, including
accounting validation and approval processing;

said user profile specifying for each said user a user
company and company group so as to define said controls

END920000176US1                    44                    S/N 09/815,312

based on company and company group;

a resource profile for each said procurement resource,
each entry in said resource profile including a
resource identifier and specifying companies to have
access to and share said procurement resource; and

said user profile and said resource profiles for
controlling user access to said procurement resources.

Felkey is specific to telecommunications services, and
outlines steps of ordering telecommunications and the
approvals (signatures) required.  He outlines associated
hardware and software, and the ordering workflow on each of
the hardware platforms.

Applicants' invention doesn't relate to approval
processing or signatures, per se, but rather focuses on how
code may be reused based on grouping various companies with
similar traits.  Grouping of companies allows Applicants to
simplify the effort of providing various functions (such as
accounting validation, approval processing, and other parts
of workflow) so that code can be reused to satisfy company
group requirements (as distinguished from individual

END920000176US1                    45              S/N 09/815,312

companies).

In the instant case, there is in the Felkey reference
no teaching of company groups, as that concept is now
recited with greater particularity in the amended claims,
nor of controlling access to procurement resources based on
a user's company group in accordance with the newly recited
claim limitations.

The Examiner appears to agree, with the following
statement:

> Felkey et al fail to teach an inventive concept of
> providing common code defining workflow components
> common to all companies within the company group
> including accounting validation and approval
> processing.

The Examiner continues:

> ...Nicastro et al teach an inventive concept of
> providing common code defining workflow components
> common to all companies within the company group
> including accounting validation and approval processing

END920000176US1                    46             S/N 09/815,312

(*see paragraph 0153*).

Nicastro refers to "company" and "project" levels, meaning that budget codes are used which are defined either for a specific project or for use throughout the company. However, Nicastro is silent with respect to the specific claim limitations now introduced in the claims as to how user profiles are built, and how company and company groups are used to control access to procurement resources.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicants urge that the amendment be entered and the case passed to issue with claims 1 and 12.

The Application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action by the Examiner is urged. Should differences remain, however, which do not place one/more of the remaining claims in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to phone the undersigned at the number provided below for the purpose of providing constructive assistance and suggestions in accordance with M.P.E.P.

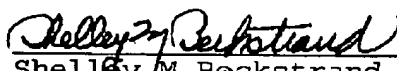END920000176US1                    47                    S/N 09/815,312

Sections 707.02(j) and 707.03 in order that allowable claims

can be presented, thereby placing the Application in

condition for allowance without further proceedings being

necessary.

                                        Sincerely,

                                        S. B. Cirulli, et al

                                        By

                                        Shelley M Beckstrand
                                        Reg. No. 24,886

Date:  9 Apr 2005

Shelley M Beckstrand, P.C.
Patent Attorney
61 Glenmont Road
Woodlawn, VA 24381

Phone:  276 238-1972

END920000176US1                    48              S/N 09/815,312